

THE QUIVER

Saturday, November 27, 1869.



"Don't they look beautiful?"—p. 114.

IN DUTY BOUND.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARK WARREN," "DEEPDALE VICARAGE," "A BRAVE LIFE," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XXI.—RUTH'S HOUSEKEEPING.

I SUPPOSE he thinks we are not so good as he is, being a professional. But for all that, Mr. Mudford could buy him clean up—stick and stone!"

This sentiment was enunciated by the ironmon-

ger's wife, as she looked round the small and plainly-furnished room in which she and Ruth Vincent were sitting.

Ruth looked pale and jaded, and sat listlessly by

the fire, her head leaning on her hand. She was tired, with the previous evening's dissipation, and not quite at ease with her conscience. She had not forgotten the sad, careworn expression of her husband's face when she returned home. Something whispered that she had done wrong in not complying with his wishes. Her mental vision was of that limited description which forbids a long-sighted view of affairs. Poor Ruth had lived in too narrow a rut for that. But in her heart she was sorry, and even now was casting about as to how she could make reparation.

Mrs. Mudford was not one of the wisest of women, and she regarded matters from her own point.

"You do quite right in sticking by your old friends, my dear. There is not one of his grand new acquaintances will do you half the good that we shall."

Ruth did not assent to this remark so readily as might be expected. "It was unfortunate," said she, at length, "that the two invitations should have come on one day. If it had not been so, Horace would have been very happy to have accepted yours." And, for once, she wished Mrs. Mudford away. She wanted to think of her husband.

Mrs. Mudford did go at length, and Ruth sat on, shedding, now and then, a tear or two of vague regret. She felt unhappy and remorseful, and yet she had no clear resolve for the future. She shrank from what Mrs. Mudford called her husband's "grand acquaintance" with invincible dislike. She had no idea as to what her duties should be, or of the actual battle of life which lay before them both. Untutored and uncultured, she had come suddenly into a position of great responsibility. She had never guessed this, in her ignorance and inexperience, nor did she guess it now. Marriage with Horace seemed to her a state of perfect security and repose. There would be nothing for her to do when she got into this haven.

"Of course, when people are married there is an end to all their troubles," she had thought.

Even now she was resolved it should be so. No lady in the land, having an establishment of servants to anticipate her slightest wish, could lead a more luxurious life than did the ex-governess of the iron-monger's children. Her occupations were simply amusements to while away her time. She had finished her wax flowers—about the most serious business in which she had engaged; and it occurred to her, as she rose languidly from her chair, that she would arrange them under the handsome glass shade she had purchased the day before, and show them to Horace on his return.

"Perhaps he will be pleased," she thought, "and come out of his gloom. I am sure I am very sorry!"

As she stood a moment, still reflecting on the scene of yesterday, the slatternly servant entered.

"If you please, mum, I'm ready to go the errands."

"Oh, very well, Martha! You must buy the meat for dinner, as usual."

"Yes, mum."

"I think we will have roast veal to-day; Mr. Vincent says he is getting tired of beef."

"Yes, mum."

"You can get the other things as usual, Martha; and don't be gone till nearly dinner-time, as you were yesterday."

"No, mum."

This was said with a slight redness of the face, and some little confusion.

"Can I take the money, if you please, mum? The butcher says he don't like long payments; and, if you please, there's the bread bill."

"Oh, very well! I must ask Mr. Vincent for some money when he comes home. You can settle with the people when you go out again."

A part of Ruth's domestic economy was never to do a single errand herself.

"If I have a servant I may as well make some use of her," was her favourite motto.

When the girl was gone Ruth busied herself with her wax flowers. She had just put the finishing touch, and was standing to admire the effect, when she heard the front door open, and in came Horace to his dinner.

She went to the head of the stairs.

"Horace!"

"Yes, my dear!"

She thought his voice had still a touch of sadness in it.

"Come up-stairs, Horace, I have something to show you."

She spoke cheerfully, and met him at the door with her sweetest smile.

"I have done my wax flowers! Don't they look beautiful?"

"Very."

"I thought you would like them. I have been working so hard. I wanted to give you a surprise."

He put his arm round her, as they stood side by side, and kissed her affectionately. He loved her very dearly, this wife of some few months; they had scarce got over their honeymoon. And how girlish she looked! He had great hopes that she might become, in time, all that he could wish.

"She is so young, and so inexperienced," he thought tenderly, "and it may never happen again."

"It" referred to the painful circumstance of the two invitations. Still, his better judgment was not hoodwinked, and never would be. It was beginning at the wrong end, he knew, as he glanced round the neglected room. Ruth had other duties to attend to. It would have given him more pleasure to have witnessed the signs of neatness and industry—signs which were systematically absent from his home. He had a haunting suspicion that something, if not everything, was going wrong. Disorderly, unpunctual, and

often wasteful meals; an utter disregard of the thrift and economy so needful in his position; all this gave him many an anxious night, when Ruth slept peacefully by his side.

He had said nothing decisive as yet; he had a great dread of fault-finding and altercation; and he had a vast amount of patience and of self-control. He kept hoping things would mend, and that his few gentle hints would be taken. He thought he might offer a suggestion.

"Ruth, my love, don't you think now you have made us so smart," he began, playfully, "that we might be tidy as well? See, your new piano is an inch thick in dust."

She glanced carelessly round.

"I tell Martha to see to the room every morning. I am sure she has plenty of time."

He glanced round again, but not carelessly, as she did.

"My mother was a first-rate housekeeper, Ruth; and she used to say——"

"Oh, that reminds me, Horace," interrupted she; "talking about housekeeping, you must allow me more money."

"More money?" said he, in a surprised tone.

"Yes; I wish you would give me some now!" and she drew a handful of papers from her pocket. "The butcher wants to be paid. I told Martha she should settle with him this afternoon. He need not have been uncivil enough to send the message."

A crimson spot came into her husband's cheek. He was keenly sensitive to the slightest shade of dishonour.

"How is this, Ruth?" he asked, in a tone of grave displeasure. "Why do you allow him to make a bill at all, when I desired you always to pay ready money?"

"But the money goes so fast, Horace; it is like snow in the sun," said she, still carelessly.

"Why do you buy the most expensive joints, and the least profitable?" he continued, as his eye ran over the items. "Half this meat might have sufficed for a family of six; and we are but three."

"You had better ask Martha, she does the marketing."

He folded up the bill in silence. His face had an expression of deep pain and annoyance.

"You had better give me twenty pounds, Horace," said she, coaxingly, "and let me get straight at once; you will never miss it."

He turned quickly round.

"You are mistaken, Ruth; I told you from the first I was not a rich man, but a man with my way to make in life. If this sort of thing is to go on, how can I make it at all?"

She shrugged her shoulders impatiently. It was evident she did not believe him.

"I had no idea you were such a screw!" said she, laughing.

He was very angry indeed. For once he had almost lost his temper. But he restrained himself, with a violent effort. He gathered up the papers. He would pay the bills, he said, and they must start afresh. This sort of thing must never happen again.

"You must learn to do your own marketing, Ruth, and not trust to a girl like Martha. She cannot be expected to take the same interest that you do in the proper management of the household."

"You chose her, I did not," was Ruth's reply, as the shadow of obstinacy began to settle over her face. By this time he was only too well acquainted with that shadow. He sighed, as he went down-stairs.

She heard it, and came quickly after him.

"Don't be angry, Horace. I am very sorry. I will do the best I can for the future."

He was pacified; perhaps too soon. The sight of the tears, which shone in the dove-like eyes, completely disarmed him. When Ruth came up to him caressingly, and tried all her little blandishments to make him forget the scene which had just occurred, he allowed himself to be diverted from his sterner mood. She was his wife, his embodiment of domestic felicity—the sweet gentle girl he had been desiring for his help-meet. Their human destinies were bound together. Apart from her, he had no interests. She was sure to improve, he always fell back on the suggestion. This lesson would do her good; in a few years she would outgrow her inexperience, and become a practical and useful woman, as well as a loving wife.

As for the clouds which loomed on the horizon, they might never come at all.

CHAPTER XXII.

A WOMAN'S REVENGE.

He stayed at home rather longer than usual. Ruth exerted herself to the utmost to please him. She caressed him, she chatted with him, she even sung to him—a rare indulgence now, for Ruth had discarded her music entirely. He was sorry when he had to go. This he thought was delightful, and what home should be. Latterly she had been too completely busied in some exciting novel to attend to him in the least.

The time slipped by, however, and he could not neglect his business. He walked briskly away to his office, feeling more hopeful and more cheerful than he had done for some time.

The first thing he did was to sit down to his desk, and bring the handful of bills from his pocket. He opened them one by one, and spread them before him.

He was a man who never flinched from an unpleasant duty. He would take the matter in hand at once. He would see how deep the mischief had gone, and how far it was in his power to remedy it.

"Oh, Ruth, Ruth! do you wish to pluck down your house in the very beginning?"

The bills were far heavier and far more inexcusable than he expected—in fact, they showed a wanton carelessness and extravagance that quite shocked him. Ruth had never cast up the total. Twenty pounds would not cover it, any more than five would!

He sat a few moments, leaning his head on his hand. He thought of his hard studies, his midnight labours, his struggles to get a footing in the world, and to earn an honest livelihood. He thought of his careful, thrifty mother, and his industrious sisters, of the slender income on which they had been brought up and educated, and his heart felt sore within him.

What kind of a future lay before him, if this sort of thing were to go on? It was impossible for him to meet all these expenses. His house had been furnished partly out of a hoard of saved money—a hoard put by for a rainy day. But, in that matter he had been deceived in the total. It was impossible to blind himself to the fact, that he should very soon be in difficulties.

Somehow, clients had not come in lately so quickly as they used to do. He had lost much of his popularity in the town; and if he lost his credit too! He shuddered at the bare idea. There was one hope alone that cheered him. A richer and better client than had yet entered his office had been half promised to him.

There was a wealthy man lately come to the town to manage the affairs of a company. He was a friend of Mrs. Jules, and Mrs. Jules, in the palmy days of her friendship, had promised to introduce him to Horace. A solicitor was wanted to arrange all the legal matters connected with the company. Mrs. Jules had named Horace, and it was almost an understood thing that he was to be engaged. If so, the post was a lucrative one, and would bring a good income and a very extended connection. On this account, as well as on many others of a less interested nature, he would not have offended Mrs. Jules for the world.

Every day he expected to hear tidings from Mr. Gilbert. Nothing binding had yet passed between them, and Horace grew increasingly anxious as he sat pondering, with the dismal array of debts spread open before him. His anxiety grew to fever heat. The appointment at this juncture would seem to be a providence.

All at once he swept away the bills hurriedly into his desk. A carriage had stopped at the door. He saw with a beating heart the face of Mrs. Jules at the carriage-window.

A bounding sense of joy quickened every pulse. Women are always generous, he thought; they soon forgive and forget. No doubt the widow was come to bring him good news. It was very kind of her; all his difficulties would be tided over. In fact, a sunny gleam broke from behind the cloud.

Mrs. Jules entered, smiling and splendid. "Her

dress was magnificent; for she seemed to have taken a pleasure in putting on all her finery. Her manner was a little hurried and excited, but that was usual with her when conducting any affair of importance.

"How very kind of you to come!" said Horace, impulsively, and replying to his own thoughts. "I was almost afraid I should never see you again."

"What! were you going to leave the town?"

"Oh, no! but I thought——"

He stopped. There was something in the lady's face which disconcerted him. He began rather to scent mischief.

"And pray how is Mrs. Vincent?" asked she, abruptly, and bringing her sharp bright eyes to bear upon his face, with a meaning and a poignancy that made his cheeks tingle.

"Quite well, I thank you."

"Of course, I never dare hope for the pleasure of seeing her. Of course, with her numerous engagements," added Mrs. Jules, laying an ominous stress on the last word, "it is hardly to be expected."

Horace coloured painfully; then, unable to endure the suspense any longer, he said, "May I ask if you have heard from your friend, Mr. Gilbert?"

"Oh, yes! and that was what I came about. Dear me, Mr. Vincent, what changes do happen in East Bramley to be sure! Who do you think is going to begin practice as a lawyer?"

"I cannot guess," replied Horace, anxiously.

"I am sure I should never have guessed, though it is all through me the thing came about. I told his mother—she is an old friend of mine, and of my mother's before me, and as fine a woman as can be seen anywhere—I said, 'It is of no use, Lady Peters, you must put your pride and your title in your pocket. The young man must live, and where can he find a better opening than in East Bramley?' You know Mr. Standfast is retiring?" added Mrs. Jules, stopping to take breath.

"I did not," replied Horace, calmly. But his lips were pale, and his voice quivered. He began to see it all now; it was a woman's revenge.

"Well, I talked to her; for Sidney Peters is rather a favourite of mine. Do you know him?"

"I do not," again replied Horace.

He is the most magnificent specimen of humanity that can be conceived. He will turn the heads of us poor folks in East Bramley, with nothing but his beauty," continued the widow, volubly. "And he is so clever. Well, Mr. Standfast's connection is first-rate, and ought to be represented by a gentleman. Sidney Peters is that, and he is sure to marry into one of our first families. He is not the man to make a blunder in a matter of that sort."

Horace winced palpably at these repeated stings; but he said nothing.

"So we settled it at last. Her ladyship is very proud, and she talked disdainfully of the position of a lawyer in a little country town; but I persuaded her.

The fact is, poor Sidney has not a sixpence, and really I wanted to get him for East Bramley. One by one people drop out of our circle; they marry or they die, until, at last, nobody will be left."

Horace was still silent. He knew what this meant. It meant that he had dropped out.

"The long and the short of the matter is," continued Mrs. Jules, "for I see I am taking up your valuable time—the long and the short is, that Mr. Peters is going to take some offices at the corner of Bank Street—a first-rate situation—and set up in the profession. He will be a neighbour of yours, Mr. Vincent."

"I perceive so," replied Horace.

"You will find him quite an acquisition. He can do almost everything. And he was educated for the law. In fact, he was articled to a relative of mine. I hope he won't run away with any of your clients."

"I hope not."

"And that reminds me—just the point in hand—my friend Mr. Gilbert—"

Horace held his breath. She had come to it at last.

"He is a friend of the Peters family—a very old friend indeed."

She paused, and trifled a few minutes with her bracelet. She had expended her venom, and now she hardly liked to go on.

Horace waited a reasonable time, and then he filled up the space. "Therefore Mr. Gilbert wishes to employ him."

"You have guessed exactly right, my dear Mr. Vincent," said the lady, looking up with a beaming smile, "Mr. Gilbert does."

"Of course," began Horace, in rather a choking voice. Then he stopped. He hardly knew what he meant to say.

Mrs. Jules rose, in all the magnificence of her costly array. He knew it was the last visit she would ever pay him; the last time, perhaps, that they should meet. He knew why she had come, and he knew the profound depth, and length, and breadth of the yawning breach which Ruth had made. Mrs. Jules, from his friend, had become his enemy. She had taken away his client, and given him instead a rival. She might never cease to persecute him to the very end. Have not kingdoms and dynasties been destroyed by the folly or the malice of a woman?

When she drove off in her carriage, he sat for a time as in a deep reverie. Painful, anxious thoughts brought to his face lines and marks of care. After a time he roused himself. His business must be attended to; and he opened his desk hurriedly. It was full of the papers he had thrust there—the bills run up by his wife.

(To be continued.)

SHORT PAPERS ON SHORT TEXTS.

BY THE REV. GORDON CALTHROP, M.A., VICAR OF ST. AUGUSTINE'S, Highbury.

I.—"TO EVERY MAN HIS WORK."

THE teaching of Christ, or at least a considerable portion of it, is suggestive of the sacred mystery of his person. It links together the human and the Divine. Like the ladder which Jacob saw, it plants its foot on the stones of Bethel, whilst its top rises amongst the angels of God and the secrets of the upper sanctuary. The fowls of the air, for instance, are associated with a lesson of confidence in the loving care of our heavenly Father. The sheep in the field supply a reminder of the relation between the Good Shepherd and the flock that follows Him. The unseen beginnings, the gradual spread, the permeating and transforming influences of the kingdom of God, are represented by the woman hiding her leaven in three measures of meal. And when the wind bloweth where it listeth, sometimes wrestling with the gigantic forest-trees, and sometimes gently bending the flowers of the meadow, our thoughts are led up to that marvellous, mysterious Holy Spirit, who is Lord and Giver of Life to the people of God.

It was quite in accordance with his usual manner, when the Saviour described his Church by the simple imagery with which the heading of our paper is connected. The church is a large house with many servants; Christ himself, the owner of it, is a man taking a far journey. Before he goes, he gives authority to his servants: he gives to every man his work, leaving them in constant expectation of his return; and of the account which they will have to render. They, on their part, are to be constantly waiting and watching. They know not when their Master cometh. They must look for him at any time, and all times. At even, or at midnight; or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning, he may appear suddenly; and they are to see to it that he does not find them negligent and sleeping.

Now the first lesson we learn from our "short text" is obviously this: that there are to be no idle hands in the Church of Christ. To every man Christ gives his work. There are, then, just as many niches as there are persons to fill them: neither more nor less. Each of us has his own post, and his own task: and our business is to find

out what the Master would have us to do, and then faithfully to do it. It may help us in the discovery, if we consider that we should not limit the statement of our text to occupations which we are accustomed to regard as especially spiritual. There is no warrant, we think, in Holy Scripture for the distinction commonly made between things secular and things sacred. For when a man has given himself to Christ, or—as we should rather say—has come to recognise the ownership of Christ, his whole life is invested with a sacredness which it did not possess before. His every act is a consecrated act. “Holiness unto the Lord” is inscribed upon his being. And the commonplace, ordinary occupations of our everyday existence become then, not only the steps of a spiritual discipline by which we are being trained for God’s presence above, but also the appointed means by which we may glorify him by doing his work below. It is, perhaps, worth while to bear this in mind. For not unfrequently good people are troubled because they are not engaged in what seems to be direct work for the kingdom of Christ. The minister of the Gospel has his preaching—his tending of the souls committed to him; the Sunday-school teacher has his class; the district visitor has her poor to comfort and instruct; the rich man has his opportunities of bestowing alms: but there are persons so situated as that no avenue is open to them by which they may approach and put their hand to spiritual occupation. Cut off, either by circumstances, or by their own incapacity, from the possibility of such ministrations, they are inclined to accuse themselves of utter uselessness in the great household of their Lord: sometimes to give way to despondency and discontent. Let such remember that the “work” which Christ gives, consists, in the first instance at all events, of the duties of the station in which they find themselves placed. There is nothing petty in a Christian life. There cannot be, now that Christ has come in human flesh. And this daily routine—this little round of little duties—this continual drudgery—as they may be induced to think it—is the appointed sphere in which they are placed to do their Master’s will and glorify his name. Probably some occupation more directly spiritual may be added on to it. The opportunities of working for Christ’s cause in this way are seldom wanting to those who look for them. But if not, let them not be discouraged. Here is their work—in the counting-house; in the workshop; amidst the daily struggle for daily bread; in the nursery; in the drawing-room; in the minutæ of domestic service—here they can serve and please their Divine Master, and, by God’s help, obey the great precept, “Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatever ye do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God and the Father by him.”

Our short text teaches us, in the next place, that every man in the great household of the Church has *his* work—that work for which he is most suited, and the duties of which he is most competent to discharge. The wise master of a house having a large number of servants under him, will take care about the distribution of his employments. He will make the best of the material at his command. You will not see weak men put into places where strength of body is required, or men of feeble intellectual capacity entrusted with offices which call for the exercise of a keen and ready wit. And this care in the selection of agents qualified for their appointed work, you would especially expect to find in the household of God. And you do find it, I believe. Look at the early Church. We read of differences of gifts and diversities of administrations. One man had wisdom, another knowledge, a third the gift of healing. To some was granted the power of working miracles; to others the divining of spirits; to others, again, the utterance or the interpretation of “tongues.” And though it may be thought that the circumstances of the primitive Christians were special, and afford no rule for us to go by, yet it is truer to the fact to believe that, inasmuch as the same Spirit is working amongst us now who was working then, and inasmuch as he is now what he was then—the Spirit of order, and not of confusion—he places each of us just where we may be most useful to others, and in the best position for working out our own salvation. We may not, indeed, be always able to discover this wisdom of arrangement. There seems to be sometimes in the Church of Christ confusion, rather than order; blundering, rather than prudent and considerate arrangement. You have a weak man where a strong one is wanted; or a hard, unsympathetic man in a place loudly calling for cordiality of manner and a genial spirit; or a dumb man, barely articulate, in circumstances where the one thing needful seems to be a free utterance and an eloquent tongue; or a man of shallow intellect to minister to a thoughtful and earnest people. Yet, is it not presumption to say that the Master of the household has made a mistake? Is it not better to believe that we are misled by appearances? Yes. There is order even when we cannot see it; there is the exact adaptation of circumstance to the exigencies of a vast plan, even when we, with our limited vision, are inclined to think that the arrangements are defective, and the machinery faulty.

And if this be so, just consider the practical bearing upon ourselves. For many of us, our place in life is decided. We could not change now if we would. Well, then, Christ has given us our work. Perhaps at certain times we may

be tempted to believe that we could have done better—better for ourselves, better for others—if our stations and circumstances had been different. We think we might have been holier and purer—more eminent and more useful Christians, if we had been otherwise placed. But the thought is a wrong one. It is the result of unbelief. The temptation ought to be resisted; for the all-wise, all-loving Master of the household has given to every man *his* work. For others of us the path in life is not yet made plain. The work is not pointed out. How are they to know the work which the Master of the household would have them to fill? The first qualification for the discovery is simplicity of heart, a genuine desire to glorify God, a true inclination to be disposed of according to his will. Realise that you are not your own, and your path will be made plain. But it will not be made plain by miraculous interference. Means will be used to guide you. Natural tendencies, which are strong and unmistakable in some people, will serve to direct you. Circumstances will help. The advice of friends and acquaintances is not to be despised. Little indications, read and understood by a spirit accustomed to wait upon God, will come into the reckoning; and in the midst of the perplexity the clouds will part, and a bright light fall clearly on the path in which the Master would have you to go. "Trust, in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Having, then, thus found his work, it is well for the Christian to remember that *Christ has given it to him*. This recollection throws a dignity round the meanest occupation. We talk of a man's "calling." We mean little when we use the word: just as when we say "good-bye" to a friend, it seldom occurs that we are expressing a wish that God may be with him: just as when we speak of a man's "talents," it is mostly without any recog-

nition of the meaning of trust and responsibility which our Lord's usage of the word in the well-known parable has thrown round it. But the "calling" of a man, whatever it may be, is that to which God has called him. And here we have a truth which the Christian alone can be said to recognise. His ordinary occupation, that by which he makes his bread, and keeps a foothold upon the world, is ennobled and glorified by its reference to Christ. It is well for us, too, to remember that our *work* must never be severed and dissociated from *watching*. There is a danger about work alone. It may be something which we may grow weary of, or it may be a something which shall serve to build up in us a hard, formalistic, self-righteous spirit. Christian service, grand as it is, cannot live if it be separated from Christ; therefore the need of watching for him. The servants in a household may get into a groove of routine. They may work for work's sake, and then—though this is better for them than sloth and idleness—the beauty and the spirit of the service is gone. But God would not have his servants work by routine, except so far as routine is a necessary support to the full, warm heart. He would have everything be done in the name of his dear Son. And if this feeling is to be kept alive in us, it can only be by constant watching, constant longing for the coming of the Son of Man.

But what of those who neither work for Christ nor watch for Christ? A day is coming in which everything will be tested by its reference to Christ. He is the centre round which it is expected that every human spirit should revolve. His love is the great principle which is expected to pervade every human life. "How stand ye with regard to Christ?" is the question which will be asked of all of us in that day. Where, then, shall those appear to whom Christ has been practically nothing, but who have been ruled and guided throughout by the predominant influence of Self?

THE HYMNS OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.—INTRODUCTORY.

THE morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," to celebrate the wonderful works of God in creation. In Paradise, the murmuring of the waters, the sighing of the trees, the singing of birds, the hum of insects, and the whole realm of Nature made sweet rhythm and music, in which man joined. We are not surprised, therefore, to find amongst the first of the families of the earth one who is "the father of all such as handle the harp and organ." The education of the world demanded

that the pure and beautiful in sound should be caught and disciplined into the service of God. But mere instrumental music, suggestive and devotional as it is, cannot fully represent the thoughts and emotions of the heart. "Songs without words" cannot in themselves tell the need of the soul; and so, doubtless, from the time when men first began to call upon the name of the Lord, psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs have been the means of conveying the soul's sincere desire, and the expression of its joy and rest, to God.

We get glimpses of the history of song throughout the Scriptures. The great song of deliverance

sung by Moses and the children of Israel, and the antiphonal chanting of Miriam, show a high state of education in the duty of praise; and when we turn to the foundation of the Temple service, we are constantly reminded of the important part which psalmody took in the worship of God.

The service of song was established with as much order and painstaking as the service of the sacrificial priests. The trumpeters, the harpers, the players on cymbals, the singing men and the singing women, all had their divinely appointed place and work, which brought down then, as it does now, the Divine blessing. "It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voices with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God."

Then came the glorious psalms of David. The sweet singer of Israel poured forth his soul in song, and the echoes of his marvellous lyrics ring in the hearts of every member of the universal Church. There is the germ of all hymnology; there are the rapturous songs of victory, the exulting strains of praise, the shout from the mountain top, and the cry from the depths; there are the sweet communings of the man after God's own heart with his Maker; and there are the strong cryings and tears of penitence. Every phase of the soul's experience finds expression in language inspired by Him who knows the secret working of the heart. It has been said of the twenty-third Psalm, and the remark will apply to many other of the Psalms, "You will not say of a single sentence it contains, 'It is out of date, it is unsuited to the life of an Englishman in the nineteenth century; and besides this, all its meaning is now known to the uttermost, all its vital spirit spent, and it has no longer power to move me.' Had it been inspired this very morning, it could not have had the charm of more dewy freshness; it could not have been more quickening, nor could it have been more exquisitely fitted to express your own best and deepest life. The solid facts of true theology, and the effect they have upon the heart, can never be antiquated; and because it sets forth some of the most gladdening of these with brevity, yet in perfection, it has an immortal novelty—it is a poem 'incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.' We may apply to it, and for the same reasons, the epithet applied to the praise of the glorified, and call it through all ages 'a new song.'"

If, therefore, in the Old Testament times, as the

faith of the people grew, and with it modes for its expression, involving increase of education, the cultivation of taste and talent, and all the best natural gifts, should the service of song in the Christian Church not take a place proportionately high?

The morning stars sang when the foundations of the earth were laid.

"'Twas great to speak a world from nought,
'Twas greater to redeem;"

and when the Saviour came forth to consecrate the world, and take away its sin by the sacrifice of himself, a multitude of the heavenly host sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men." And all the universe became vocal at his advent, and responded to the appeal, "Praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light!"

The Saviour, whose birth was heralded with the sweetest, gladdest song the earth had ever heard, constantly honoured the synagogues with his presence when the choral service was sung, and repeatedly explained to his disciples the things "concerning himself" in the Psalms. One of the brightest scenes of his life was gladdened by the song, "Hosanna! Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!" Himself, "in the selfsame night in which he was betrayed," sang a hymn ("In the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto thee"); and his triumphal entry into heaven, as the exalted Prince and Saviour, was accompanied with the grand processional anthem, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in."

The canon of inspiration closes with a prospect of the whole ransomed race—of all nations, peoples, kindreds, and tongues—joining in the service of song in the Paradise of God. Nor are the redeemed alone to sing it. All the universe is to unite in the eternal worship, and every creature in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, will sing together, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

That the singing of psalms and hymns formed an important part of the worship in the early Church, we learn from the writings of the apostles; but of what they were we have no record. Whether the psalms of David were sufficient to express the need of the "children of the new covenant," or whether the great facts of the life and death of our Lord were rehearsed in poetic narrative, we do not know. At a very early period the *Magnificat*, *Benedictus*, and *Nunc Dimittis* became the expression of the faith and hope of the Church.



(Drawn by EDITH DUNN.)

"While folded fingers mutely lead
The spirit forth in prayer."—p. 126.

The earliest hymn extant is one that was sung at the lighting of the evening lamp, and was written in the first or second century—

"Hail, Jesus Christ! Hail, gladdening light
Of the immortal Father's glory bright!
Bless'd of all saints beneath the sky,
And of the heavenly company.
Now while the sun is setting,
Now while the light grows dim,
To Father, Son, and Spirit,
We raise our evening hymn.
Worthy Thou, while time shall dure,
To be hymn'd by voices pure;
Son of God, of life the giver,
Thee the world shall praise for ever."

St. Basil, who preserved the foregoing hymn, writes thus on psalmody: "Psalmody is the calm of the soul, the repose of the spirit, the arbiter of peace. It silences the wave, and conciliates the whirlwind of our passions—soothing the impetuous, tempering the unchaste. It is an engenderer of friendship, a healer of dissensions, a reconciler of enemies; for who can longer count him his enemy with whom to the throne of God he hath raised the strain? Psalmody repels the demons; it lures the ministry of angels; it is a weapon of defence in nightly terrors, a respite from daily toil. To the infant it is a presiding genius, to manhood a crown of glory; a balm of comfort to the aged, a congenial ornament to women."

During the long night of the Church, when the religious life of all Europe was under the domination of the Papists, it was not likely that hymns giving the trustful, joyful expression of the soul's happiness should make much progress. Some of the hymns of the early centuries, however, are sweet beyond compare; and one loves to cherish the memory of such "divine songs" as may be found in "Hymns, Ancient and Modern."

But when Luther—the Joshua of Christendom—broke the chains which bound down the spiritual life of the Church, and proclaimed the simple truth as it is in Jesus, then came there forth the voice of song, and all Europe thrilled with such hymns as—

"Now praise we all our God,"

and

"A sure stronghold our God is He,"

which carried in their tone of assurance now hope to the weary souls who had been waiting long to hear the messengers of the Gospel proclaiming liberty to the captive. The Church universal owes an inexpressible debt of love and gratitude to Luther, whose hymns have been the germs of the hymns of all countries. It seemed to catch the fervour and spirit of that saying of Luther's when, recovering from his fainting-fit during the Diet of Augsburg, in 1530, he said, "Come, let us defy the devil and praise God by singing—

"Out of the depths I cry to Thee!"

But what has all this introduction to do with

the Hymns of *England*? Just this. We have taken a rapid glance at the sources of the stream of song which we think will help us in our inquiry into the peculiarities of some of our English hymns, and the circumstances under which they were written. Many of the hymns which we sing to-day are hymns which were sung by the Hebrews in their "beautiful house," altered and suited to our times and condition. Many a true and enlightened Christian, who rejoices in the new covenant, nevertheless praises God in the language of the old. Many a little conventicle of the strictest sect of the Nonconformists, utters its devotion in songs which were born in cloistered aisles, and chanted by monks. Many lays and lyrics which we have made our own and seem to breathe the prayer of to-day, are derived from the hymns which were sung in the very early days of Christianity; many are borrowed from the sacred poetry of Syria, and many from the Latin churches. Hymns of praise and prayer have been in all ages of the world, and in all countries, identical in many particulars; and we shall hope to refer in these papers to the origin of many of what we call the hymns of England, and find that they are really the hymns of the whole kingdom of heaven.

In England the Reformation did not produce such rapid advances in Christian song as in Germany. The Latin hymns, with their sweet flow of sacred, thoughtful tenderness and pathos, were abandoned, and in their place came stiff pious writings, altogether destitute of poetry. Sternhold and Hopkins "did" the Psalms of David into verse, and the churches were content to receive these rough, rugged, and inexpressive vehicles of praise. Some few had just a touch of poetry in them, but the majority deserved the censure which Thomas Campbell has given: "With the best intention and the worst taste they degraded the spirit of Hebrew psalmody by flat and homely phraseology; and mistaking vulgarity for simplicity, turned into bathos what they found sublime."

The Elizabethan age was singularly devoid of hymn-writers; and of those which were written very few, if any, are suitable now for public worship. A strange fantastic style, full of emblems and conceits, was the characteristic of this period, represented by Donne, Spenser, Raleigh, Gascoigne, Wotton, Wither, Herbert. The two last named wrote during the early part of the reign of Charles I., and have left some hymns which are immortal; but partly owing to their very peculiar metres, and their unsuitableness for public worship, can only find a place in books of sacred poetry for private devotional use. Quaintness culminated in Quarles, whose "Emblems" are the very quintessence of the conceits of the times.

The faults of this period have been thus summarised: "Artificiality, exaggerated emblematicism, coarse materialism, affectation, and frigidity."

A little later on, and then began the droppings of that shower which refreshed the Church, and gave to our English hymnology a new history. The saintly Baxter has left several hymns that will live; and one, rich in trustful confidence, has been a comfort to many even in our own time, who, like him, being "destitute, afflicted, tormented," have been able to say—

"Lord, it belongs not to my care
Whether I die or live;
To love and serve Thee is my share,
And this Thy grace must give.

"Christ lends me through no darker rooms
Than He went through before;
He that unto God's kingdom comes,
Must enter by this door."

And the last verse breathes a sweet trust and a warmth of affection which the majority of hymns of that period so greatly lacked. Looking forward to the life beyond death, he says—

"My knowledge of that life is small,
The eye of faith is dim,
But it's enough that Christ knows all,
And I shall be with Him."

Baxter wrote a metrical version of the Psalms, and two volumes of poetry on religious experience. He wrote much about death, and one of his poems commences thus—

"My soul, go boldly forth,
Forsake this sinful earth.
What hath it been to thee
But pain and sorrow?
And think'st thou it will be
Better to-morrow?"

Curious that on his death-bed, when asked how he did, he should have replied, "Almost well!"

One other writer of this century has left us some imperishable hymns. Bishop Ken, whose "righteous soul was vexed from day to day" in the court of Charles II., at whose death-bed he was present, exhorting the dying king to receive the sacrament, has left a priceless legacy to the Church in the hymns—

"Awake, my soul, and with the sun,"
and
"Glory to Thee, my God, this night."

They have expressed the prayers of millions. Little children have learnt them as their first petitions to the Father's throne, and old age has recalled these memories of childhood, and found life through them. In the most enthusiastic moments of religious fervour, the Church has found no better channel in which to express its praise than in that wonderful doxology—

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow,"

of which Montgomery says, "It is a masterpiece at once of amplification and condensation; amplification in the burthen, 'Praise God,' repeated in

each line; compression, by exhibiting God as the object of praise in every view in which we can imagine praise due to him."

At length, in the eighteenth century, the silence of the Church in its service of song, which had only been broken now and again by the angel-voice of some sweet bard, was ended in the minstrelsy of a thousand tongues; and on this wise began the mighty change.

In the little meeting-house at Southampton, Isaac Watts, a youth of twenty, worshipped with his father; but the dull and drowsy hymns, "bleated" to duller and drowsier tunes, were a source of great vexation to him, and he did not fail to make his complaints known to his father, who was a deacon of the church. "Then try and improve them," said he. The lad did so, and soon afterwards, at the close of one of the Sunday services, his first hymn was sung—

"Behold the glories of the Lamb,
Amidst his Father's throne;
Prepare new honours for His name,
And songs before unknown."

The hymn was a prophecy. "Songs before unknown" were now prepared. In 1707 his first hymn-book appeared. Taunted, it is said, by his father for his extreme dislike to Tate and Brady's "New Version of the Psalms," he was inspired to give his own version, and in 1719 it was published.

From this time the world was inundated with hymns. Dr. Watts contributed no fewer than 697; but as it was not possible that all these could be good ones (some of them, in fact, are execrable), more than half have dropped completely out of use. Then came the Wesleyan Revival, and with it the demand for more hymns; "for while John Wesley roused the hearts of the people to sing, his brother Charles put songs in their mouths;" and this he did to the number of 600.

A new history and a new life was now given to psalmody. Instead of the singing of hymns being an interruption to the service of the sanctuary, as it too often had been, it now became its greatest aid to devotion. Every phase of religious thought and feeling was depicted in song; and pulpit ministrations were assisted and supplemented by practical, expository, and doctrinal hymns, in many cases prepared to accompany the sermon.

The men of this time who stood out from among the crowd, and have left immortal hymns, were Watts, Doddridge, Wesley, Toplady, Cowper, and Newton.

To speak of some of the hymns of England, classified under the headings *General*, *Narrative*, *Expository*, *Meditative*, &c., and tell the stories connected with their origin and their authors, will be the pleasant task before us in these papers.

(To be continued.)

BABY JEANIE.

PART II.

IF you please, miss, do you know where master is?" asked a servant, entering the room with a paper in her hand. "Selby told me he was not in the breakfast-room."

"Leave the paper here, I want it, and I will give it to papa when I go down," I answered, unwilling that the servants should make their comments on papa's and Sylvia's conference.

The girl laid the paper down before me. Thinking to pass the time I took it up, and my eyes fell upon the list of governesses wanted, which I read through mechanically. Presently I heard some one enter the adjoining room. I went in, and there was Sylvia with her face buried in the bedclothes, and crying so that I was quite frightened.

"Sylvia, dear; do tell me what is the matter with you," I said.

"Nothing," returned Sylvia, angrily.

"That there is something, I cannot help seeing,"

I answered, "and it makes me so unhappy! Will you not let me know?"

By degrees Sylvia softened down and told me her trouble. She had fallen in love with a young artist, who, by merit of his wonderful genius, had been admitted to mamma's conversazioni, he being of poor and of very humble origin. They had met frequently, and he had told her of his love, and begged her to allow him to come to papa at once. This she had peremptorily forbidden, knowing what his answer would be, and Paul Levenson, fearful of losing her, had obeyed her, though, as she owned, very much against his will. He had written to her once or twice before, but she had always managed to get the letters from the postman herself, until this unfortunate morning when he, not having seen her for several months, had written to her, begging her consent to his communicating with papa.

I asked what papa had said about it, and she answered that he had spoken very severely, calling her Paul a dishonourable fellow, who was only seeking to work his way into a good family, and to marry a woman with a fortune; and that on these accounts alone he had wished to marry her. Of course, Sylvia indignantly denied that such were his true motives; and although I could not blame papa for his caution in such a matter, yet, from my knowledge of the young man, I felt convinced that he had judged him wrongfully.

The worst part of this unfortunate business in Sylvia's eyes was that Paul Levenson was to be written to by papa; and she feared that as she could not explain to him the true state of affairs, he might doubt her sincerity; so, to ease her mind,

I promised to see papa and beg him not to send this letter, or, if he did so, to let Paul know what had taken place,—which was perhaps a very foolish undertaking, considering all the circumstances.

Leaving Sylvia very much relieved, I went down into the library. Papa started up as I entered, and I noticed that he looked dreadfully white and ill. A letter was lying open on the table at his side.

Thinking only of Sylvia's trouble, I said, "What about poor Sylvia, papa?"

"Are you alluding to this shameful affair?" papa asked.

"I do not think it so shameful as you seem to," I answered. "The only shame—or, I should say, the principal shame—is Paul's poverty. He wished to act honourably, but Sylvia, anticipating the objections you would raise, forbade him to come to you. You must confess that he was awkwardly placed."

"What business had he to fall in love with her?" papa replied, impatiently.

"What business had you to fall in love with mamma, an earl's daughter, while you were only beginning life as a merchant?" I asked, trembling for the result of my impudence.

"Your mamma and I were very, very fond of each other; and though I was poor at the time, I worked hard to secure an income fit for her before I married her."

"Exactly so," I answered, delighted. "Now why cannot Paul do the same? He is a perfect genius, and sure to succeed in life, especially if he had your promise to urge him on."

"My promise that he shall have Sylvia, you mean. But it would be such a bad match for her."

"Not so bad as that she should marry a man she does not love."

"Well, I will think it over. You have put it to me in a new aspect, and I am inclined to come round to your way of thinking; but I am afraid your mother will be very much averse to it. At present, I shall take no steps whatever; so you may set your kind little heart at rest, so far."

Very much delighted at the result of my conversation, I was going away, when papa called me back. "Sit down a few minutes, I want to talk to you a little, Jeanie," he said.

I came back, and sat down beside him, wondering what was coming; and again I noticed the anxious and haggard appearance his face had assumed.

"I said just now that I had managed to get a sufficient income before I married," he began.

"Yes, papa," I answered.

"I cannot manage it now," he continued. "I have had loss after loss, and now that this American war has commenced, I see no way to clear

myself. In fact, I am already on the verge of bankruptcy. Do you understand me?" he asked, impatiently.

"Quite, papa," I answered, "but, if it should come to the worst, there is still mamma's fortune, is there not?"

"Your mamma's fortune is very small indeed. She was the youngest child of a large family; but apart from the smallness of it, it would break my heart to see her spending it on me, instead of my keeping her as I ought."

Anxious to turn to a less painful portion of the subject, I told papa of an advertisement for a governess I had noticed in that morning's paper, and begged him to allow me to accept it, and add towards the household expenditure the eighty pounds a-year offered.

"Eighty pounds!" papa answered, "that would not half keep yourself, as we are living now."

"What can I do for you, papa?" I asked, a little down-hearted.

"There is something you can do for me," papa answered, "though I hardly like to give it you."

"Oh! please do, papa," I exclaimed, eagerly.

"It is a journey, and to London. Do you think you could manage it alone?"

"I am sure I could," I answered.

"You must keep it from your poor mother. I am too ill to undertake it, Jeanie darling, and I cannot bear to send you, scarcely more than a child as you are."

I looked at dear papa, but he only seemed a little tired, so I began to think that the illness he spoke of would soon pass off.

"I want you to find out this address," said papa, handing me a piece of paper, on which was written the name and address of papa's lawyer. "You are not to leave until you have delivered this letter, and in all probability, Mr. Meredith will accompany you on your return."

After receiving many directions with regard to my journey, for I had never before travelled any distance alone, I left papa in order to put on my things, during which time my thoughts were busily wondering as to the contents of the letter, and the urgency of the circumstances that could induce papa to send me on so long a journey alone.

August 20th.—But for my promise to dear Edwin, I should not have found courage to relate all the sad incidents of the last months. It is all very, very strange, and I am afraid we shall be many months before we get used to our new life:—mamma in her plain gown, and deprived of all the surroundings that she has never before been without, and myself raking up all my stores of knowledge to teach the school that I have managed to get together.

I met with some little difficulty in discovering Mr. Meredith's address, but was fortunate enough

to find him at home and ready to return with me, so that in a much shorter time than I had expected I was once more safely at home. Papa was still in the library, the servant said, so I went and tapped at the door. Receiving no answer we went in. Papa was sitting just as I had left him, only looking dreadfully white. Mr. Meredith sent me into the drawing-room, as he said I needed some refreshment, and though I wondered at his doing so, I obeyed. I learned the reason very shortly afterwards. Mr. Meredith had arrived too late; the business on which he had come would never be transacted.

The first months of our bereavement there is no need to speak of. When everything was arranged, we found, as I had feared, that there was scarcely anything left, the greater part of mamma's money having gone to pay debts. It was arranged, by my wish, that a school should be taken for me, which after months of really hard work is beginning to pay. The only difficulty I find is about the accomplishments. I cannot teach them, and my sisters will not, though Sylvia has at last agreed to teach singing if I get her a class. For the rest I am compelled to engage masters, thereby losing a great deal of profit.

Paul Leverson has acted nobly. No sooner did he hear of our altered circumstances, than he came to mamma, and begged her to allow him to see to the many little businesses that occur in such a position as ours, and are so very perplexing.

After a little while, he asked mamma for Sylvia, and so greatly has he won upon us all, that not only did mamma give her consent, but we were all delighted with the prospect of such a good, kind brother-in-law. He is also rising rapidly in his profession; so that, after all, Sylvia's marriage will not be a bad one, even in the eyes of the world.

On looking back, I see that on this day a year ago I made my first entry in my diary. This day next year Edwin will be at home.

New Year's Day.—More than three years have gone since I last made an entry in my diary. Only that I somehow lost it, and never till to-day rescued it from its place of concealment in an unused desk, it would bear witness to many important changes. First of all, Edwin's return and his surprise at our altered circumstances—for as he was constantly moving about I was unable to write; his delight at my bravery, as he called it, and regret at my hard work; next, poor mamma's death; then, some time after, Sylvia's marriage; and last of all, my own. Edwin's income is now more than even dear mamma, in her anxiety for me, could have deemed sufficient, so that my husband and I are able to offer Lydia and Georgiana a home.

The title of "Baby Jeanie" belongs no longer to me, although it is still as dear a household name as it has ever been.

L. M. C.

TRANQUILLITY.

To take some holy book and read
The thing recorded there,
While folded fingers mutely lead
The spirit forth in prayer:
To watch the setting sun, to mark
The slow waves of the sea;
To hear the night-bird fill the dark
With his wild melody,
While breathing low,
The sweet winds blow,
This is tranquillity.

To lift the silent latch of thought,
And search in its domain
For ancient mem'ries deeply fraught
With solace to the brain:
To listen for the Master's tread,
And know his time is near,
To feel the peaceful pillow spread,
And rest devoid of fear
Till the tired breath
Shall cease in death,
This is tranquillity.

A. HUME BUTLER.

STELLARIA.

MARY, what is that beautiful white star, growing so high in the hedge?" asked Emily. "I wish we could reach one."

"I can easily get some for you," said Charles, "for I see the roots in the banks; and though the stems are long, I can manage to disentangle a few from among the thorns. See, here is one already."

"Thank you, Charles. Now, Mary, tell us the name, please."

"It is called stellaria, because it is so like a star."

"Look!—look to this side," exclaimed Charles; "there is a great constellation in that brake of briars."

"Are they not lovely?" said Emily. "Oh! how much prettier than anything in the shop windows in town."

"Some people would not agree with you," replied Mary. "I do, for I much prefer God's works to those of man. When I was a child, I lived in the country; and there was a pretty green lane near my home, where the hedges were intertwined with stellaria stems. Often in the month of April I used to stand gazing in admiration at the quantity of white stars with which they were studded. One day, in particular, I recollect walking down the lane, for the first time after a long illness, and thinking that all Nature looked even more than usually bright and refreshing. It was early spring, and I observed a profusion of stellaria blossoms, and longed to gather some; but, alas! they were quite beyond my reach. I was about to pass on, when, turning round, I saw a little girl standing near."

"I think I could get those for you, miss," she said. And without waiting for my answer, she stepped into the muddy ditch, climbed the opposite bank, and, drawing the starry blossoms towards her, presented me with a beautiful bunch. I thanked her,

and passed on, for the wind was cold, and I was afraid to stand long, having been recently ill.

"In a few days I again visited the pretty lane, and had not gone far, when I was met by the same little girl, holding in her hand a large bunch of wild flowers.

"Miss, I have been watching for you ever so long; and here are the largest white stars I could find."

"Thank you," I replied. "They are very pretty; and now will you tell me your name, and where you live?"

"Yes, miss; my name is Lettie, and I live with father, in that small house near the end of the lane."

"I suppose you have come there lately," I said; "for the last time I passed that way the cottage was quite uninhabited."

"We left our old home two years ago, just after Billy ran away, and have been going about from one place to another ever since, till we settled here last month."

"Who is Billy?" I asked; "and where did he run to?"

"Billy's my brother, miss; and I wish I could tell where he ran to. Father and I don't know; we never saw him since."

"Have you no mother, poor little girl?" I said, glancing at the rags in which she was clothed.

"No, miss. Father says I had one long ago, and that we'd all be better if she was alive still; but I don't remember her. Billy does; and I think if she'd been with us, he wouldn't have run away. Poor Billy was fond of me too; he used to carry me about when I wasn't able to walk, and bring me flowers and pretty things he'd find when he was out. After a while he began to play with great rude boys, and hadn't much time to care about his little sister. Then he'd be out very long of a night, and would do nothing next day, and father would be angry with him when he'd come in. One day father was very cross, and said

bad words to him, and hit him with a stick, and Billy ran out of the house in a rage, and never came back any more. I lay down that night, and cried myself to sleep; but after a while I wakened up a little, and felt some one kiss me. I opened my eyes a bit, and thought I saw Billy standing beside my bed, and heard him say, "Good-bye, little sister. Don't forget me, and I'll never forget you." But next morning, when I awoke, I thought it was only a dream, and I'm not sure yet if it wasn't; anyhow, Billy was gone. Wherever he is, I'm sure he sometimes thinks of me, for I'm never done thinking of him, and wondering when I'll see him again. I wanted to go and look for him, but father wouldn't let me. He said he was old enough to take care of himself, and he was a bad boy. Indeed, I know he wasn't too good; but he never knew how, for no one told him the right way.'

"Why did not your father teach him?"

"Oh! poor father, he never was taught himself, so how could he?"

"Do you know the right way to be good?" I asked.

"Yes, I do," she replied; "but, for all that, I'm often bad, and that's far worse than Billy, that doesn't know. He never was at Sunday-school, and hadn't a kind teacher to tell him how God loved sinners, and how we ought to try to please Him, who is so good to us. Billy can read, but he never looked into my Bible, though I often left it in his way."

"Does your father read it, Lettie?"

"No, father can't read; but when he's in good humour I venture to say a verse or two off, and he listens; but I'm afraid it's only to please me. He really likes to hear me sing hymns; but that's because he's fond of music, for he doesn't care for the words."

"Where is your father now, Lettie?"

"He's out working to-day, and as I was alone, I came here to gather flowers. I love those white stars, because they put me in mind of Billy, who used to get them for me long ago, and they make me think I'll see him once more; for the stars in the sky go away, but they come back at night (often I've watched them shining out one by one in the evenings); and these starry flowers, although they go away also, yet they come again in a year. That's long, certainly; but Billy might come back after a long time, too. So the stars in the sky, and the stars in the hedges, both make me hope about him."

"Just then we arrived at the end of the lane, and were obliged to part."

"It was a long time before I saw this little girl again, for having caught a severe cold, I was unable to leave the house; and when at length I revisited my favourite lane, the stellaria and all its pale spring companions had disappeared, and were succeeded by the brighter flowers of summer."

"Failing to meet Lettie, I walked on to the cottage

in which she lived. The door was shut, but as I drew near I heard a voice within singing softly the well-known children's hymn—

"Here we suffer grief and pain,
Here we meet to part again,
In heaven we part no more.
Oh, that will be joyful!"

I tapped gently, and hearing the voice say, 'Come in,' I raised the latch and entered.

"Lettie was leaning over the embers of a worn-out fire, trying to warm some milk. She started and exclaimed, 'Oh, miss, is it you? I thought it was neighbour Johnson, who sometimes looks in to see how father is, and brings drinks for him.'

"Is your father ill, Lettie?"

"Yes, miss; he hasn't been able to work for the last week, but I hope he's getting better now."

"I did not remain long, as she had to attend to her father; but from this time I paid her frequent visits, and my mother allowed me to carry various comforts to the sick man. After a little, he so far recovered as to be able to resume his work, and Lettie was in great spirits at seeing her father so much better; but it was evident to us all that his health was greatly broken. While he was out, she used to lock their door, and come to me for an hour or so, to read and work; and I taught her to mend her clothes, so that she soon presented a tidier appearance."

"Winter came and went, and spring returned. Lettie's father had been gradually declining in health. He was obliged to give up his daily occupation, and she could not leave him at all. My mother employed her to do some needlework, which enabled her to earn a little money, of which they were badly in need."

"One day in the latter end of March I was setting out to inquire for the invalid, when I saw my uncle's carriage approach the gate, and hastened to meet him."

"I am come to pay you an unexpected visit, Mary," he said; "are you all at home?"

"Yes," I replied. "Mamma and papa are in the house, and I will return with you."

"He immediately stepped out, saying, 'William, take the carriage to the yard, I shall walk up the avenue.'

"Uncle," I said, "you have got a new coachman. Where is old Oliver? Surely you have not parted with him after so many years' service."

"No, my dear; I have not got a new coachman, nor have I parted with old Oliver. He is not well, and the young man you saw is an assistant in the stable, who, being a good whip, and a steady fellow about horses, was recommended by Oliver as his substitute for the present."

"When we arrived at the Hall door, I found Lettie waiting; she said her father was worse, and begged I would give her something to do him good. I sent medicines, and promised to go to her in the even-

ing, but when the time came I found it impossible to carry all the nourishing things my mother had given me.

"My uncle, seeing me perplexed, good-naturedly said, 'You can take William. I am sure my horses are properly attended to by this time.'

"I ran off, and leading William, desired him to follow me to the cottage. When I addressed the boy, there was something in his countenance which seemed familiar. I puzzled myself thinking where I could have seen him before, until I came to the part of the lane where the stellaria grew. It was again in bloom, and Lettie's image as she had stood there a year ago, rose vividly before me. Suddenly a bright idea occurred to my mind. Surely it was her face of which William's reminded me, and acting on the impulse of the moment, I stopped and said—

"Did you ever hear of a little girl called Lettie?"

"He seemed surprised, but answered at once, 'I had a sister of that name, miss.'

"Then you are Billy, I exclaimed?"

"That was what they called me at home, long ago, miss. Oh, could you tell me anything about my sister Lettie? I wish I knew where she and my father are."

"Well, I'm just going to take you to them," I answered. "And now tell me where you have been, for I have heard a great deal about you from Lettie."

"Poor child," said William, "I was sorry to leave her, but I had a quarrel with my father, and ran away. I know now I was in the wrong, but I was angry, and didn't think so then."

"Did you go back to see Lettie that night?"

"Yes, miss; I hid myself near the house till dark, and crept in through the window; for I took a longing to see the child for the last time, and I thought I'd just look at her asleep. Then I set off, and went to the sea-side, for I wanted to be a sailor; and soon I got engaged on board a coal vessel. I went one voyage, but that gave me enough of it; for I was ill nearly all the way; and no one cared what became of me—whether I lived or died. When we landed, I was very weak and ill; but I determined to make my way to my father, ask his forgiveness, and try to be a good boy, and work for him and Lettie; but they were both gone when I arrived at the old home, and no one knew where. A man whom I formerly knew gave me small jobs of work for charity; and when he saw I took pains to do them well, he recommended me to the old coachman at the Hall, who wanted a boy to help with the horses; and I have been there for the last year."

"By this time we had reached the cottage door, and I desired William to remain outside, until I prepared Lettie and her father for his appearance. I found the old man a good deal better, and Lettie advanced to meet me with a few stellaria blossoms in her hand.

"These are the first white stars I saw this year, miss; I gathered them as I was coming along."

"You see they have come back," I replied. "Perhaps Billy will return too; remember, these stars like flowers always make you hope, and really I do think you will see your brother soon; for, do you know, I heard something about him to-day?"

"Oh! what, miss—what did you hear?"

"He is nearer than you suppose," I replied.

"They fixed their eyes anxiously upon me, as I spoke, and seeing further suspense would be too much for the old man, I opened the door and called Billy.

"He entered timidly, and I saw Lettie gaze at him for a moment, then throw herself in his arms. He gently disengaged himself, and leading her along, kneeled beside his father's bed.

"Thinking it better to leave them alone, I went away, closing the door quietly, so that they did not notice my departure."

"Surely that's not all, Mary," said Charles. "Tell us what happened to them afterwards."

"The old man only survived his son's return a few months. Very soon old Oliver was obliged, from ill-health, to give up his situation as my uncle's coachman, and William became his successor. Lettie was sent to a good school, and afterwards became children's maid to my cousins, where she was very happy, in the same house with her dear brother Billy."

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

64. What teaching seems implied in the Lord's breaking bread at every meal?

65. The men of a city whose princes were scourged with briars, because they refused to give bread to certain hungry men who begged of them.

66. Upon what occasion did the Lord say, 'Wisdom is justified of all her children?'

67. What was the reason which the Lord gave to account for the error held by the Sadducees?

68. The three times in which the Lord exhibited his power over death by raising the dead, are in a remarkable scale of progression.

69. What act of the Lord's was so peculiar to him, that he was once recognised by it when all other signs of recognition had failed?

70. By what means did St. Paul become acquainted with the facts and doctrines of the Gospel?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 111.

58. Elijah (1 Kings xix. 4). Elisha (2 Kings vi. 33)

59. Gen. xvi. 13.

60. Judg. xii. 6.

61. 2 Sam. xx. 16. &c.

62. 1 Kings iii. 39.

63. 1 Kings xvi. 24.